168 a child were introduced by the State and local self governments. Working mothers received a paid vacation for four weeks before and six weeks after the birth of the child. These measures helped to increase the birth rate to a certain extent but not sufficiently. Economic difficulties immediately after World War I, the depression at the beginning of the 1930's, and the approaching thunder in the political skies of Europe played their part in keeping the birth rate low.

855 [586] A family environment was considered best for growing children, and since the divorce rate was not high in Estonia, the great majority of children [736] received parental love and care. Children's homes, usually run by local governments, were established for children from broken homes.

000 The parents normally enjoyed prestige in the

851 Baptism is usually a big feast
795 celebrated at home some weeks after the birth of the child, with relatives and friends attending. The next big celebration in a young person's life is his confirmation day, a time of presents
585 and gay parties. Weddings used to be the biggest
369 of all celebrations, which in the country often lasted for several days, sometimes even as long as a week. Weddings in urban communities
764 are usually one-day affairs. Funerals were also a time for large gatherings, but the time was spent mainly in quiet conversation.

527 One of the nationally celebrated holidays is St. John Day's Eve (jaani-laupäev), June 23rd, famed in all northern countries as the midsummer (equinox) holiday. The romantic traditions of this night are still kept alive in the countryside and many townspeople go out to celebrate it: Barrels stuffed with lumber and tar are placed

584 plans; the priest bethrothed them and then notified their parents. Oftentimes the latter disliked the marriage, sometimes to such degree that they were at loggerheads with the young people but the priest usually managed finally to reconcile them. Then the bride's mother grasped the bride's hair, while the bridegroom cut it with a knife. The bride's mother handed the hair over to the bridegroom, saying: "Take her hair as well as her head, you are her
● 585 master and she is your slave." After the relatives were summoned, the bridal pair was sent to the Russian church to wed. When they came home, the bridegroom's sister or some other woman relative received the bride, led her into the room and left her standing at the right side of the door, while she herself stood at the left side. The guests sat at the table, but the bride had to stand and curtsey all the time until the sun went down. Then the bride was led out by the same woman. If the bride was very tired and nearly fainting, then somebody supported her from the other side. She was led to the wedding bed in another room. The bridegroom, accompanied by three or four men, came and asked her whether there was space also for him in the bed. The woman answered in the negative, but after bargaining and haggling the bridegroom was, for a few rubles, permitted to go to bed. After an hour or two the young couple were called out of the room and then the dance began, accompanied by a bagpipe. Finally the young couple, both of them holding onto a plate on which there was a glass of vodka, offered vodka to the people; the people drank while lying on the floor and rewarded the couple with money. The wedding celebrations lasted for a couple of days. When the guests left, they presented the bride with shirts and hens, everyone according to his means.

584 recognized by his in-laws as their relative. The village girls now begin clattering the plank used for closing the oven and chase the bridegroom out of the room. Then they go walking in the village, singing and clattering the plank so that everyone knows what is going on. Before the go-between leaves, a horse collar is thrown on his neck. He neighs like a horse, runs out of the front hall and throws the collar down. The bride sings a weeping song to her father, mother and relatives and finally to all the village people. After that everybody, except the bridegroom, goes home.

Some days later the youths of the village come to clean the wedding house. The boys clean the walls of soot and dirt, while the girls wash the floors.

● 585 On the morning of the wedding the mother wakes the bride with a weeping song. The bride, standing in front of the door and wearing a wreath made of paper flowers in her head, awaits the arrival of the bridegroom's party. Her sister throws herself on her neck and they together sing a weeping song. Then the bride three times puts her wreath on the head of her best girl friend, but each time it is given back. This is repeated with each girl who is there. When the bridegroom arrives, the bride's godfather takes a whip, icon and pillow and leads the bride to the wedding room. There the bridegroom's relatives have to put money into a wooden bowl, and only when there is enough of it are they allowed to sit down at the table. After the bride's mother has distributed her gifts to the relatives, they go to the church. On the next day they go to the house of the bridegroom where the young couple is received with special ceremonies. The bride's mother distributes here also presents, and the young wife sweeps the floor.

264 denominations or sects.

Table knives and forks are, for the Vepsians, too much of a luxury. Kettunen had a fork of his own, but the Vepsians did not like it and said: "It's really terrible to look at when you stick it into you lip."

515 It goes without saying that if people and animals live together, cleanliness cannot be achieved. The Vepsian children, too, did not add to the overall cleanliness of the homes. Kettunen relates that the children liked especially to sit on the eating table. Often the mother lifted her dirty, crawling child down from the table and threw a hot pancake to him, saying lovingly, "Eat, my dear."

One of the routine jobs done on Sundays is the killing of lice. For this purpose the whole family, one after another, kneels down in front of a girl who scratches the scalp with a big sheath-knife.

796 Customs, superstitions, and recreation.

The Vepsians stick to their old customs faithfully. Especially the most important events of a lifetime, the marriage and funeral, must follow set rules to the minutest detail.

585 The marriage of the South Vepsians is preceded by a feast (kăzi-išk) in which the girl and her parents give their final consent to marriage. Some days before the wedding the girls of the village give a party for the bride,

585 which ends with a secret ceremony: the nude bride, standing on a frying-pan, is washed all over, and this water is mixed into the pie dough. These pies are given to the bridegroom and the wedding people to eat so that they will all like the bride.

The wedding ceremony consists of two parts: the first and more important is the farewell party given at the bride's home before the wedding in the church; after the wedding comes the celebration at the bridegroom's
585 home. While the bride dresses herself for the
789 wedding, she has to put on several magic things, such as a stone of special shape on her neck, broken needles into her dress, and a string of pearls blessed by a monk around her neck; to obtain the pearls the girls have to make pilgrimages of hundreds of miles to the Valamo or the Solovetsk monasteries. Guns are then fired to scare off the evil spirits and the magic spells of wicked people. The bride and bridegroom have to sit close to each other so that they will not be alienated later on. It is especially important for them not to move from their places without an urgent reason. If they must leave, then someone sweeps the floor in front of them. Before the young people, together with their company, leave for the church to get married, the matchmaker goes three times around the whole party hitting the earth with a whip. After the wedding, several other customs have to be observed in the bridegroom's home, such as the chasing away of a bad spirit (pätšinrahkoo) from above the stove, etc.

585 The wedding ceremonies of the North Vepsians differ considerably from those of the South Vepsians. A characteristic feature of the North Vepsian wedding is the repetitional arrival of the bridegroom's party to the bride's house on the wedding day and the withdrawal to a neighboring farm. Each time, the representatives of the bride have to go to this farm to ask them to come back. In these goings back and forth, one of the two best men (drushka) plays an important role; wherever they enter, he makes a sign of the cross with his whip on [789] the door. Before the wedding party leaves for the church, the wizard (noid) has to perform several tricks in order to keep off the evil. The wizard and the best men have to keep vigil all the time during the wedding ceremonies so that no bad or jealous person will harm the bridal pair. Harm to the bridegroom is especially feared, lest he be unable to fulfill his duty as a husband during the wedding night.

764 With death are associated several customs. The corpse of an adult is kept for three days in the house, that of a child for two days. Right after death the corpse is washed and his best clothes put on. On the head of a man a cap is placed, on the head of a woman a white bonnet. Then the corpse is lifted onto 765 a table under the icons. After the message of death spreads through the village, the people begin to gather in the house of mourning. There weeping songs are sung both in Vepsian and in Russian. Hymns are sung only for well-to-do Vepsians.

181 It was also impossible for them to under-
157 stand why certain anthropologists were digging up their dead. Since Professor Setälä's last visit to the Livonians took place not long before the outbreak of the first World War, they were convinced that the professor had sent the war. When Loorits and Professor Kettunen were doing field-work among them after the war, the Livonians considered this a bad omen, for "the war will come again."

183 Customs and superstitions. The Livonians stick faithfully to their old customs and traditions. Especially the customs of marriage and burial, as the most important events of a man's life, are followed in the greatest detail.

585 Wedding customs are slightly different in various villages. In Ire, for instance, they are as follows: When the young man has chosen his bride, they both go on horseback to have their banns read. During the following few weeks the girl is very busy with preparations for her wedding gifts. The wedding takes place on Sunday morning at the regular church service. Before going to church, the bridal pair is betrothed. This happens when they are seated at a table and their hands are placed upon each other; certain relatives also place their hands upon or underneath the hands of the young people. The bridegroom and the bride then go to church in different carriages, the bride wearing a high pearl

585 crown on her head and long wide silk ribbons fluttering behind her. She has a wide apron on her waist and white stockings on her feet. After the wedding ceremony the newlyweds drive together to the bride's home, where the farewell party is held. The best men and maids of honor go to another house where they dance until evening. When they finally arrive at the farewell party, they find many people waiting for them at the closed gate and asking for a passport. The newcomers give them a big paper, but this does not help; only a bottle of liquor serves to let them enter. Meanwhile, the bride and her mother have hidden themselves. When the mother is finally found, she is asked for the keys of the granary in order to look for the bride there. At first a bunch of wrong keys is given; only after they have given money do they get the right key. In the granary they find three brides instead of one, the eyes of all of them covered. When the right one is finally picked out, all go into the house to eat and drink, after which follows joyful dancing.

After the bride has distributed her gifts and the people have danced and sung, they all go on horseback to the bridegroom's home. The bridegroom has gone there before the others to wait for his bride. There the companions of the bridal pair are replaced by others. At the bridegroom's home the main program consists also of dancing and eating. In the evening the bride is led to the granary,

585 where the crown is taken off her head and a cap is put on instead, as a sign of a married woman. The celebration continues for a day and night, and at its end the bridal pair is presented with money.

764 Besides the wedding, much attention is paid to the burial. During the burial the old customs are exactly followed and various signs are observed in the fear that they may have some bearing on the life of the living.

527 789 Certain memorable days of the year are observed. Special customs are connected with each saint's day and holiday. On Matthias Day, for instance, one is not allowed to bring light into the room, so that there will be no flies. On Nicholas' Day, the people must boil meat and kill a cock. On Martin's Day the boys put on fur coats, inside out, make a beard like that of the devil, take a cane and roam around, beating children and girls. On Shrovetide evening the girls put white shirts on and go out to make fun. On Anthony's Day net weaving is prohibited, otherwise the pigs will tear it. On the morning of Maria's Day a key is given to the pigs, so that the pigs will know where to get their food. On Good Friday the girls go to the barn to feel the testes of the ox or ram so as to find many bird's eggs in the spring. On Christmas Eve the people go out to look at the stars to find out whether there will be many little lambs. And on Christmas they drink beer, eat

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the Chappel, they offer a Sacrifice of Fruits and Fleſh, for the preſervation of themſelves and their Cattel, for the next Year. The whole is concluded with Feaſting, Drinking, and Quarrelling.

Their Marriage Ceremonies are much of the ſame ſtamp; for, if a Peaſant marries a Laſs out of another Village, he fetches her from thence on Horſeback, ſhe imbracing him with her right Arm. In his Hand he holds a Stick cleft at the upper end, where he puts a piece of Braſs Mony, which is given as a Reward to the Perſon who opens the Wicket, through which he paſſes. In their return, beſides a Bag-piper, Two of his neareſt Kinſmen ride before on Horſe-back, with drawn Swords in their Hands, wherewith they ſtrike twice croſſwiſe the Door, thro' which they are to enter the Houſe, where the Marriage is to be Conſummated; and as ſoon as the Bridegroom is ſeated, they fix one of theſe Swords in a Beam over his Head, to prevent Charms, as they ſay; to prevent which, the Bride alſo, as ſhe paſſes along the Road, ſcatters ſmall Pieces of Red Woollen Stuff, eſpecially near the Croſſes, where croſs-ways meet, and upon the Graves of Unbaptized Children, who are here Buried in the High-ways. The only thing moſt worth taking notice of among ſo barbarous a Race, is, That after the Bridegroom and Bride are ſet down at Table with the other Gueſts, they don't ſtay with them till the end of the Feaſt, for fear of overcharging themſelves with ſtrong Liquor, but within half an Hour after retire to the nuptial Bed, where after they have made the beſt Tryal of their mutual Strength for two Hours, they return to the reſt, and ſpend the remaining part of the Day and Night, with Eating, Drinking, and Dancing; till what with Drunkenneſs, and what with Wearineſs, they drop down upon the Floor, and ſo fall a ſleep together. If the Bride has been able to ſave a little by her Drudgery, ſhe wares upon this ſolemn Occaſion, a Necklace of thin Plates of Silver round the Neck, of the bigneſs of a Crown Piece, and one of the ſame Mettal hanging down on a Chain from the Neck upon her Breaſt, of the bigneſs of a ſmall Wooden Trenchar. For the reſt, their Garments are commonly of home-made courſe Woollen Cloth, the Womens Petti Coats being like Sacks, without any Pleats.

Formerly the neglect theſe miſerable Wretches ſhew of their Salvation, was in a great meaſure attributed to the